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Killers among us

by BRIAN LOCKHART

It is a largely forgotten crime, but pretty spectacular for its day.

In 1973, and man in disguise, entered the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce in Kenora, Ontario, with firearms, a bomb, and bags to hold money. He held a ?dead man's' switch between his teeth, so if anyone tried to stop him and he released the switch, the six sticks of dynamite strapped to his chest would explode.

He asked the bank manager for money, and told him to call the police. According to the bank manager, the man was calm and rational.

The man said he wanted a ride out of town. He hadn't thought his escape route very well. All roads out of Kenora are dead-end logging routes, due to the extreme rural location, except the one that leads to the Trans Canada Highway.

A local police officer in plain clothes volunteered to drive the get-away truck and help carry some of the money. As word spread around town, a large crowd gathered to watch the event.

As the man and police officer exited the bank carrying duffel bags full of money, a shot rang out - a police sniper fired a single shot hitting the man. A split second later the bomb exploded showering the streets with over $100,000 in cash ? all of which was found when they started sweeping up the mess. The police office, while injured, survived the blast. There was extensive damage to the bank and store fronts.

To this day, 50 years later, no one knows who the bank robber was. He was never identified.

He must have been someone's son, brother, father, friend, or acquaintance. Somewhere, someone probably wondered what ever happened to ?good old Bob,' the guy they knew in high school. And yet know one ever noticed a man, in his 40's, with a distinctive red beard, was missing. They couldn't provide a composite drawing or photograph of his face because it was pretty much eliminated when the bomb went off.

He, or what's left of him, was buried in an unmarked grave in the Kenora cemetery.

Ontario is a peaceful place, but there are a lot of people out there responsible for horrendous crimes, that have never been caught or identified. Forget about the gang bangers shooting each other in Toronto, for them, it's a hobby.

There are many unsolved murders in the province and someone is responsible.

In 1984, a 38 year old mother in Frankford, north of Trenton, was found murdered in her garage ? by her 12 year old daughter. No reason known, no suspects.

In 1990, an innocent 13 year-old girl and her mother, in Cumberland Beach were attacked in their home at night. The mother was severely beaten on the head with a metal object, likely a pipe or tire iron. The girl was sexually assaulted and murdered in her back yard. No suspects, no one arrested.

Police theorize the perpetrator was local. Someone in Cumberland Beach knows who did this.

In Lucknow, in 1988, a 25 year old woman had returned from a home coming dance, then disappeared. The case was recently re-opened when a witness finally reported they had heard a woman screaming for help and running in a nightgown between

Lucknow and her family farm. Someone knows what happened to her.

In 1996, a man received what appeared to be an early Christmas present at his home in Moffat. It was a bomb disguised as a flashlight. When he turned it on, it exploded, killing him in his home.

In 1991, a couple parked their RV in a rest stop, near Blind River. At 1:00 a.m. someone pounded on the door demanding entry. The woman was shot and killed. A person saw the commotion and came to help. He was also shot dead. No one was ever arrested.

In 1985, an eight year-old girl disappeared in Etobicoke while going to meet her friend to go swimming. No suspect, no one arrested.

In 2010, nurse was violently murdered in her own home in Orangeville. Thirteen years later, no one has been arrested in connection with the case.

In 2022, a mother of three was gunned down and died in the driveway of her home in Alliston. No arrests. No suspect.

London, Ontario, has a full roster of unsolved murders of young women dating back to the 60's. No one arrested, no suspects.

These are just a few examples of unsolved murders or disappearances in the province. The list is long, and disturbing.

How can so many people be violently murdered, and no one one held accountable?

These killers are out there somewhere, and so are people who have knowledge of the crimes, but aren't talking.